

Victim Compensation Connection

A bimonthly publication of the California
Victim Compensation Program

June 2006

From the Desk of Karen McGagin, Executive Officer

In this issue...

New Claims Management
System to Debut . . . 2

VCGCB Releases Strategic
Plan . . . 4

Making Connections:
Joint Powers Unit . . . 5

Rosario Marin
*Board Chair
Secretary, State and
Consumer Services Agency*

Steve Westly
*Board Member
State Controller*

Michael Ramos
*Board Member
District Attorney
San Bernardino County*

Karen McGagin
Executive Officer

Helping California Crime
Victims Since 1965



victimcompensation.ca.gov

PO Box 48, Sacramento,
CA 95812-0048

1.800.777.9229

As we come to the end of this fiscal year and begin the next one, 2006-2007, the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board is in the midst of significant changes.

First, we have just published our new 2006 Strategic Plan. The plan outlines four key goals—excellence in customer service, continued funding stability, excellence in information technology, and a positive workplace environment—that we are both committed to and very excited about. You can read about the details of this plan in the newsletter, or access the plan itself on our website.

Second, in line with two of the key goals in our Strategic Plan, our new claims management system, CaRES (Compensation and Restitution System) will go live on June 30. CaRES has been two years in the making and every underlying principle in the new system is designed to improve service to our

Everything that we are doing right now is pointed in one direction—to provide timely, efficient, and compassionate services to crime victims and their families.

claimants and providers and make the most of today's technology. As we gradually implement this new system over the next year, we are going to see



numerous positive improvements in communication and customer service.

Everything that we are doing right now is pointed in one direction—to provide timely, efficient, and compassionate services to crime victims and their families—and, as our vision statement says, to do it with excellence as our standard. I am convinced this is one of the most eventful times to be at the VCGCB in its 41-year history. We are looking forward to the next fiscal year, 2006-2007, and as we move through the year I will keep you updated on our progress!

New VCGCB Claims Management System to Debut June 30

On June 30, 2006, the Victim Compensation Program's new claims management system, the Compensation and Restitution System (CaRES), will go live. This new system, two years in the making, is a foundation for the future and will bring 21st century technology to the compensation program. The project has been a tremendous team effort involving over 100 staff members and stakeholders, representing all sectors of the Victim Compensation Program, and divisions of the VCGCB.

Changing the way we do business

CaRES will change the compensation program business process from beginning to end. Now, when an application comes into the system, it will be scanned and archived. Analysts and support staff will do all the work on the files digitally. No paper files will be created – everything will exist within CaRES.

The CaRES interface has many timesaving features. Staff will be able to validate addresses and zip codes automatically and send faxes at the click of a mouse. The CaRES letter generator will produce correspondence that looks professional and is easy for claimants and providers to understand.

CaRES will have a tremendous positive impact on the ability of the VCGCB to provide timely, effective services to claimants and providers. Using CaRES, the VCGCB expects to decrease the amount of time a claimant or provider has to wait from the time an application is filed to the time a payment is issued.

Phased Implementation

CaRES will roll out in several phases. A special "Go Live" team of analysts and support staff will begin by processing about 100 applications per week in July, gradually increasing the number put into the system until, by October, all new applications coming to the VCGCB office in Sacramento will be entered in CaRES. This gradual rollout will give the development team a chance to make sure the system is functioning smoothly. Also during this time, the VCGCB Policy and Training Unit will have a chance to provide training on the new system to all the employees at the office in Sacramento.

In 2007, the VCGCB will implement CaRES throughout the Joint Powers Verification Units across the state.

A Look Into the Future

This first version of CaRES is just the beginning. Although paper applications will always need to be available for claimants who don't have access to computers, in the not-too-distant future, applicants and advocates will be able to submit applications on-line.

Eventually, applicants, advocates, and providers may also be able to check the status of claims and payments on-line or by using a PIN number and an automated telephone system, just as you might check your bank account today.

Through CaRES, the VCGCB intends to automate a good deal of data exchange with other state agencies, law enforcement, and allied agencies.

CaRES is designed to reduce a claimant's waiting time, not just by days, but, eventually, by weeks.

Karen McGagin



Excellent Customer Service

“For claimants and providers, the most difficult part of the compensation process is the time it takes for the system to move from application to payment. We hear this again and again in customer service surveys, and on the phone,” said Karen McGagin, VCGCB Executive Officer. “Even though we have reduced that amount of time considerably over the last few years, it is still hard to wait when you are hurting and need help.”

“Everything we have done in CaRES is designed to reduce a claimant’s waiting time, not just by days, but, eventually, by weeks.”

CaRES addresses two key goals listed in the VCGCB 2006 Strategic Plan—it will not only make use of the best in technology, but through CaRES the VCGCB will be able to deliver excellent customer service.

CaRES is not the only area where the VCGCB is making technological progress. A new accounting system, scheduled to come on-line in July, will complement CaRES and provide quick accurate access to financial data regarding payments.



Three CaRES Team members (from left) Veni Reddy, Anandh Namasivayam, and Tony Yu



June 30
is
CaRES
go live!

Planning for the Future

On May 4, 2006, the VCCGB released its 2006 Strategic Plan. This plan is more than a list of things to do; it's a road map to a vision of a future VCGCB.

Rich Mallory, a consultant from Citigate Associates, facilitated a series of meetings, interviews, and focus groups with employees and stakeholders. "He asked them to dream big about what the VCGCB could and should do in the next few years, and it worked," said Karen McGagin, VCGCB Executive Officer. "This plan points us in a clear direction, focusing on building a culture of customer service and enhancing our technology in order to make that happen."

An all-staff meeting allowed each employee the opportunity to contribute ideas, and the VCGCB executive management team finalized the plan at a two-day meeting.

The new mission statement of the VCGCB is "to serve our claimants and stakeholders through effective assistance and timely resolution of claims."

The spirit of the plan is really embodied in its list of values. The values emphasize the organization's commitment to customer service, communication, professionalism, teamwork, continuous improvement, and agility – the ability to change when change is what's needed.

There are four strategic goals outlined in the plan:

- *Excellence in customer service*
- *Continued funding stability*
- *Excellence in information technology*
- *Positive workplace environment*

This strategic plan maps out objectives for each of the four goals. In order to achieve excellence in customer service, the VCGCB will develop an organization-wide customer service culture; build partnerships; share resources; remove barriers; and improve communication. The VCGCB will ensure continued funding stability by working to improve restitution imposition and collection, and by continuously monitoring the stability of the Restitution Fund and the Government Claims Program.

The organization will foster excellence in information technology by implementing the new compensation

claims management system (CaRES) and a new claims management system for the Government Claims Program. The VCGCB will foster a positive workplace environment by enhancing employees' opportunities for professional development, implementing an employee recognition program, and providing a professional working environment.

The executive team also created a detailed operational plan that will help the VCGCB achieve

The
VCGCB
vision:

*Excellence as
our standard*

these strategic goals and objectives. "The regular milestones and performance measurements outlined in the operational plan will really bring the plan to life," McGagin said. "We will use the operational plan to make our vision a reality for VCGCB claimants, stakeholders, partners, employees, and the California public."

The 2006 Strategic Plan is available on the VCGCB website at www.vcgcb.ca.gov.

Making Connections: Joint Powers Verification Unit

Did you know that the California Victim Compensation Program has 21 satellite offices in California Victim Witness Assistance Centers (VWAC)? These local connections are a major key to the program's success. In every major metropolitan area, the VCGCB has contracted with local VWACs to receive and review compensation claims through Joint Powers agreements. These centers provide crucial connections to local services for about two-thirds of the victims who file compensation applications. The local centers accept applications from 20 California counties, either directly or through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with neighboring counties.

At the VCGCB Office in Sacramento, JoAnn Goodwin manages the team that supports these centers, the Joint Powers Unit. "The county JP units are our number one customers. Our unit is dedicated to making sure they have the support they need to carry out their part of the VCGCB mission, providing effective assistance to claimants and timely resolution of claims," said Goodwin.

In addition to Goodwin, eight highly experienced employees work in the Joint Powers Unit - six analysts and two support staff. Unit staff help the county centers by providing quality assurance services and assisting with the review of claims involving complex issues, such as vehicle purchases or home modifications for disabled victims. JP unit employees also provide all types of technical assistance and monitor each county's contract.

Last year, unit staff made site visits to all the centers. "It's always great when we can sit down in person and talk with the teams in each county," said Goodwin. "We get to know each county's resources, problems, issues, and strengths. And we get a better idea of what each county needs from us by visiting in person."



VCGCB Joint Powers Unit, clockwise from top left: JoAnn Goodwin, Clyde Hooten, Afzal Rashid, Dionne Bell-Rogers, Marcie Faubel, Cindy Gray, Margie Flores, Pam Gow, Imtiaz Ahmad

Joint Powers Centers are crucial to the success of our overall effort to provide excellent customer service to victims.

Afzal Rashid

This month, unit staff will hold a two-day training in Sacramento for supervisors from the centers. The training will give center staff a chance to discuss in detail new mental health policies, learn more about developments like the new dental treatment preauthorization process, review statistical reports, and review many other issues.

"County Joint Powers Verification Centers are crucial to the success of our overall effort to provide excellent customer service to victims," said Afzal Rashid, manager of the Quality Assurance Mental Health and Joint Powers Division of the Victim Compensation Program. "These centers are local, understand the needs of the victims in their counties, and they have close relationships with local victim service providers," said Rashid.

Governor Schwarzenegger Highlights Crime Victim Issues in April

Governor Marks \$100M in Restitution Collections

Governor Schwarzenegger announced that California exceeded \$100 million in total restitution collections at a news conference held in Santa Ana on April 27, 2006. The news conference was attended by district attorneys, including San Bernardino County District Attorney and Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board Member Michael Ramos; probation officers; and crime victims and their families.

California leads the nation in restitution collection. This year, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) surpassed \$100 million in restitution collected from inmates and parolees since collections began in 1992. CDCR currently collects over \$1.3 million a month from inmates. The Governor's appearance at the news conference occurred during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

Governor Creates New Position: Crime Victim Advocate

In April, the Governor also created a Crime Victim Advocate (CVA) position in his office. The CVA will be appointed to serve in the Governor's Office and will be California's first central point of contact on state and federal policies that affect victims of crime. The CVA will collaborate with law enforcement, state agencies, local government, and federal agencies to propose



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger discusses the importance of crime victim restitution programs at the Orange County District Attorney's Office in Santa Ana on April 27, 2006.

streamlined processes for victim services funding, service delivery, the protection of crime victims' rights, and the administration of grants and contracts to local victim service organizations.

17th Annual Victims' March On The Capitol

One of the ways the VCGCB honored Crime Victims' Rights Week was to participate in the 17th Annual Victims' March On The Capitol on April 24. Many of the VCGCB's employees marched to the Capitol together. Along with other victim service providers, the VCGCB hosted a display booth with informational brochures about the Victim Compensation Program. Colorful commemorative ribbons with the theme "Victims' Rights: Strength in Unity" were distributed during the day.

Victims' Rights Week Events Around The State

Executive Officer Karen McGagin and Chief Counsel Kathleen Andleman attended an event sponsored by the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office on April 28th honoring victims and witnesses.

On April 26th, Chief Deputy Executive Officer Tom O'Connor joined the San Francisco District Attorney's Office in a celebration honoring the outstanding organizations and individuals who fight for justice on behalf of victims of violent crime in San Francisco.



VCGCB Booth at the April 24 March on the Capitol

Crime Victims' Rights Week, cont.

VCGCB staff also attended the Attorney General's Annual Crime Victims' Conference in Sacramento on April 28th, and local events in five counties throughout the state.

Janice Patton-Reents, Analyst for the Quality Assurance Mental Health Section, supported the Los Angeles City Attorney and Mayor by running in their 2nd Annual 5k Run/Walk for Victims' Rights on April 23rd.

On April 24th, Ted Boughton, Deputy Executive Officer of the Victim Compensation Program, was a guest at the Nevada County Victim Witness Assistance Center's Ribbons of Hope 2006 Crime Victims' Awareness Luncheon.

The Deputy Executive Officer for the Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division, Laura Hill, and Restitution Manager Michele Smith attended the Monterey County District Attorney's Office 7th Annual Victims' Dedication Ceremony on April 25th.

Order Compensation Materials Free of Charge

Applications for crime victim compensation, brochures describing the compensation program, and victim compensation posters are available free of charge. The VCGCB has been filling requests for the new brochures, and more are being sent out daily as requests are received. The compensation application and other materials are available in both English and Spanish.

If you would like to replenish your supplies, you can find a Materials Request form on the VCGCB website at www.victimcompensation.ca.gov on the Forms and Publications page. You may also call 1-800-777-9229 to order materials.



VCGCB Logo Wins Statewide Award for Excellence in Graphics



The VCGCB's new logo was the gold winner (first place) in the graphics category at the 2005 California State Information Officers Council (SiOC) Awards banquet and ceremony held on May 11th in Sacramento. VCGCB staff attended the ceremony and received the award on behalf of the VCGCB. Eleven other state agencies also won awards in various categories at the annual competition.

SiOC conducts the awards ceremony to recognize government agencies for their outstanding communication efforts. SiOC is a nonprofit, professional organization of communications professionals. The new logo was designed by Sem Lona, a student assistant and graphic designer in the Planning and Publications Unit. The logo is fresh, professional, and reflects the VCGCB's mission.

Fran Clader, SiOC President, presents the award to Christie Munson, manager of the VCGCB Planning and Publications Unit

Calendar of Events

April 13

Restitution Unit staff conducted training for 30 Santa Clara County Department of Revenue staff.

April 17-19

Restitution Unit staff presented certified training to approximately 150 probation officers in San Diego.

April 21

Policy and Training staff presented a two-hour overview of the Victim Compensation Program to approximately 70 victim/witness advocates at the CDAA Victim Advocate Training Institute.

April 26-28

Victim Compensation Program staff attended the 6th Annual San Diego Family Justice Center Conference.

April 28

Restitution Unit staff provided Restitution Law training to 11 Deputy District Attorneys in Stanislaus County.

May 2

The Policy and Training unit presented an overview of the Victim Compensation Program at the Department of Defense Victim/Witness Assistance Conference in San Diego.

May 3

Restitution Unit staff offered certified training to 35 probation officers in San Mateo.

May 4-7

VCGCB staff attended the 42nd Annual California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists in Palm Springs.

May 5

Quality Assurance Mental Health Section and Joint Powers Section staff gave a presentation at the Santa Clara County 24th Annual Child Abuse Symposium.

May 12

Policy and Training staff conducted training for 30 advocates from Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties in Visalia.

May 24-25

Revenue Recovery and Accounting Division staff presented training to 30 adult and juvenile probation officers in Alameda County.

June 4-9

The VCGCB participated in the first California Victim Assistance Academy (CVAA) in Fresno.

June 16-17

VCGCB staff will attend the National Crime Victim Law and Litigation Conference in Portland, Oregon.

June 21, 2006 The Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee is set to meet at the VCGCB.

June 26-30, 2006 VCGCB staff will attend the California District Attorneys Association Summer Conference in Newport Beach.

Victim Compensation and Government Claims
Board
PO Box 48
Sacramento, CA 95812-0048